



MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 7th April 2025

Time: 7.30PM

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

PRESENT:

Councillors (9) Cllr Buckley (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Hawkins, Cllr Irvine, Cllr Blanks, Cllr Clegg
Cllr Spearman, Cllr Mrs Jackman, Cllr Ms Wood, Cllr Kinnear,

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan De Luca, Parish Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer

Members of the Public (7) – in EFDC Cllr Bromwich

Members of the Press (1)

C24.182 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (3)

Apologies from Cllr Bedford, Cllr Tyler and Cllr Mrs Etherington.

C24.183 OTHER ABSENCES (2)

Cllr Stroud and Cllr Born.

C24.184 MINUTES

Councillors **AGREED** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 3rd March 2025, and **NOTED** the minutes of the Environmental Meeting held on 31st March 2025, as well as **RATIFYING** the increase in fees included within these minutes.

C24.185 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Spearman declared an interest in both the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan.

C24.186 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chairman welcomed the public present. Cllr Bromwich provided an update, advising he had been busy this month. He had met with Cllr Irvine the prior weekend and visited the various roads in Hastingwood, discussing matters including signs to report in Mill Street, a couple of fly tipping hot spots, litter in both Hastingwood Road and Mill Street, speeding, light pollution, antisocial lighting, and pollution in Shonks Brook. It was hoped that a community speedwatch could be conducted in the coming weeks. Cllr Bromwich confirmed that the signs had been reported. He advised that he had attended a Community Speedwatch session in Upland Road with Cllr Clegg the prior week, which showed that 25% of the cars were speeding over 36MPH, the top speed being recorded at 50MPH. He had attended the litter pick session in Weald Hall Lane, where 35 bags of rubbish were collected from ditches and hedges, including 18 nitrous oxide canisters which had been reported to PC Cook. As part of the 'Take Pride in your Street' campaign, Cllr Bromwich had reported 30 signs to be cleaned or replaced if necessary, and this is expected to be completed mid May. Cllr Bromwich had also met with the EFDC Youth Council discussing volunteering opportunities as well as suggested attending Parish Council meetings. He had also reported 4 occurrences of fly tipping, 3 of which had been removed. Cllr Bromwich advised that he had noticed shrinkage on the Wetpour at the play area on Weald Common, to which the Clerk confirmed such matters are considered as part of the Councils maintenance and inspection programme.

The Chairman invited members of the North Weald Flying Club to address the Council. The club representative thanked the Parish Council for their support, stating that things were still up in the air, however they believe it may be possible to move to Merlin Field but further research is needed and they are still waiting to hear back from EFDC. They have made contact with another flying field and a local farmer, but there is no idea how much work is required to be make that site suitable. The club representative advised that the Flying Club may come back to the Parish Council asking if they could provide some help with this. At present the Flying Club has 7 days access to the site from dawn to dusk and when the club are operating they need to be in contact with EFDC to ensure activities do not encroach on flying activity on the airfield itself. However, if they do move to Merlin Filed it is likely they will be offered considerably less access. The club representative once again thanked the Council for their support.

[2 members of the public left the meeting]

The Chairman welcomed previous County Councillor Jackson, and invited him to address the Council, advising Councillors that the matter to be discussed was regarding agenda item 9 which it was agreed to be brought forward to this point in the meeting.

C24.187 UPLAND ROAD – RED LINES – JUNCTION WITH HIGH ROAD THORNWOOD COMMON

At the meeting in September 2024 the above matter was discussed where it was agreed that this matter should be monitored for 6 months, and as long as the Parish Council did not receive any further objections from numerous residents then this matter would not be pursued any further. A copy of the earlier minute was included within the body of the agenda.

Mr Jackson stated that had had spent many years pursuing this matter, and finally got NEPP to agree to put double yellow lines down, however it was agreed very last minute to change this to red. The problem with both red and yellow lines is that they have to be enforced, but the difference with red lines is that people who want to post letters, or the Royal Mail staff, are unable to park there for any duration. Mr Jackson stated it would be dangerous to park on the other side of the road. He also advised that he had checked and there was not another post box at the other end of Upland Road. Mr Jackson stated that his concern was that if this post box was not well used or was too difficult to access, Royal Mail could decide to permanently remove it. Mr Jackson asked the Council to consider approaching NEPP and asking to have the lines changed to double yellow.

Another member of the public stated that prior to the lines being installed he had been tasked with obtaining feedback from local residents, and when doing this he had followed the strict protocol as to how and who to consult. The feedback was that residents were very happy with the red lines. Cllr Clegg confirmed that the survey was conducted very stringently as to the criteria that was requested, and asked councillors to bear in mind that it was the engineer who had suggested red lines. The outcome of the survey was that 79% were all for it, but if you measure it based on the surveys that were returned it was 100%. Cllr Clegg also stated that it would be more dangerous to walk in the road when people park on the pavement, and that he had seen the postman park both on the opposite side of the road and further along the road, so he was not confident the red lines were causing a problem. Cllr Clegg stated that he doubted either red or yellow lines would be enforced, as the police don't have the manpower to do it, and there was no local policeman. However, the red lines being there really do act as a deterrent.

Cllr Clegg read out an extract from an email trail regarding the red lines which stated there was a strict process for contesting the red lines, and that the site cannot be contested after 6 weeks had expired, and as such there was now no way to legally contest this.

Some Councillors did express concern as to the possible loss of the post box if it was not used. After further discussion, Cllr Irvine **PROPOSED** that the red lines should remain given that there was strong local support for them, that there was not a strong enough reason for them to be altered to yellow lines, and that he could not see there was a power we could use to make any contrary recommendation at this time, but perhaps consider again in 6 months time. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Spearman, after which a vote was taken, the result of which was:

For – 10

Against – 0

Abstention – 1 (Cllr Clegg)

It was therefore **AGREED** no further action would take place, but that this could be reviewed again in 6 months.

C24.188 REPORT OF THE CLERK

The Clerk provided an update on current matters, detailing that staff had attended a number of EFDC training sessions including CIL and Self Build. There had been one planning enforcement matter which had been taking up some time – works to a field at the junction of Canes Lane and Hastingwood Road where hard standing had been placed. The Clerk had been liaising with EFDC and Cllr Bedford on this matter. The Clerk had also been liaising with EFDC Transport Officer with regard to the possibility of EV charging points being located on street columns in North Weald. There were various cemetery matters ongoing, and works continued regarding the move to the Queens Hall. Works continued on the Wayleave for Tudor House, along with a grant bid for the Shared Prosperity Funds for works to the Thornwood Hall roof. The Clerk advised Councillors of the death of Mrs Jean Tringham.

The Clerk advised Councillors that the organiser of the Thornwood Market had offered a donation to the Thornwood Common Parish Hall towards a new water heater in the kitchen, and for hedgehog houses on the allotments. If Councillors wished to accept this donation, a formal handover would take place at the next Thornwood Market. Councillors were extremely grateful for this kind offer, and Cllrs Clegg and Spearman confirmed they would be available to attend the next Market event.

C24.189 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

- a) **Chairman's Report** – The Chairman advised that he and the Clerk were hoping to appoint a new gardener to manage the area outside North Weald shops shortly.
- b) **Vice Chairman's Report** – Cllr Hawkins advised that herself and Cllr Spearman had visited the allotments at the end of March for their first visit this year, and all sites look great. In addition, she would be meeting a local resident to progress celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the Parish Hall in Thornwood, and asked Councillors to contact her directly if they wanted any input.
- c) **District & County Councillors Reports** – The Clerk read out a written report that had been submitted to her by EFDC Cllr Burrows, which included a request from a local resident who had contacted Cllr Burrows asking that one strip of grass along grass verges is not cut so wildflowers can be encouraged to grow. The Clerk advised that it was Qualis who cut the verges. Cllr Ms Wood advised she would support this. The Chairman reminded Councillors that himself and Cyril Hawkins had tried to get as many daffodils planted in the Parish, some of which still looked great.

It was **AGREED** to support this in principle, as long as the grass cutting that is completed is done to a good standard. The Clerk reminded Councillors about Cllr Burrows event on the Airfield.

- d) Parish Councillors Reports** – Cllr Irvine mentioned about the works taking place at the corner of Hastingwood Road which had taken up quite a lot of both his and the Clerks time. Cllr Chris Whitbread and Cllr Bedford had also been involved. Cllr Irvine had some pictures of the site which were shown during the meeting, with an explanation given as to the works that had taken place. Cllr Irvine advised that two weeks ago the area was a green field, but was now filled with concrete and considerable preparation works were taking place. This was of great concern for local people, and had raised a number of questions given no planning permission had been sought. The questions were:

Q. Is this illegal? Can the farmer dig up a field and concrete it over.

A. Cllr Irvine advised that farmers can complete such works under permitted development rights, but there are size limits and restrictions, and it seemed as though the size of these works were far in excess of what was permitted. As such, EFDC Enforcement has been asked to go and measure the size of the works.

Q. How many vehicles will be entering the site and using this new hard standing?

A. There is no requirement for the farmer to declare the number of vehicles if works are undertaken using permitted development rights.

Q. The site is using an access point which has been closed for many years. Just 30 yards up the road there was a request for an access point to Glovers Farm Barn which was denied due to highway safety. Can the farmer just open this up, and what would be the effect on St Clares.

A. The farmer would not be subject to the same rules under permitted development, and the effect on St Clares would not be a matter to be considered under permitted development.

Q. This has a negative effect on residents and is an eyesore.

A. Under permitted development, there are some restrictions in terms of what can be stored on site, however as long as it is not one of these restrictions, the effect on residents is not a matter to be considered.

In conclusion, Cllr Irvine stated the development is very unwelcome by local residents with the feeling that it spoils Hastingwood, but in terms of this Councils ability to take any action, it boils down to asking EFDC Enforcement if the rules have been strictly followed. One of the rules is that the land has to be used for agricultural purposes, but who would police this.

The PFO provided a summary of the requests that had been made to enforcement to investigate, with proper action only being taken after the third request. Cllr Irvine stated that the Parish Council needed to keep a very close eye on this situation. The Clerk confirmed she was liaising directly with Cllr Bedford on this matter, and that she would be attending a meeting early in May to discuss some works in this area but she had no further information at this time. Cllr Blanks stated he was suspicious when people did not give full information or withheld it. Cllr Spearman suggested this may be something to do with nuclear reactors for the Google Site, and that it was expected there would be a Government announcement in June about this. The Chairman thanked Cllr Irvine for his very detailed update.

Cllr Clegg confirmed that the Community Speedwatch site in Hastingwood Road had been revoked in favour of the site at Weald Bridge Road, so an official speedwatch session could not take place there, however he would be happy to have a look and obtain unofficial speeding figures one Saturday morning.

- e) **Queens Hall Charity Report** – Cllr Ms Wood confirmed that the asbestos survey would be taking place this week, and thanked the Parish Council for their support in paying for this. There had been one incident where somebody had sat on the sink in the ladies toilets resulting in it coming away from the wall, which will result in a cost to repair. The committee maintains the hall to the best of its ability, but they cannot be responsible for somebody sitting on the sink. Play in the Park is this Thursday, and Active Essex are in the hall this coming week.
- f) **Highways** – no report.

C24.190 FINANCIAL REPORTS

- a) Councillors **NOTED** the monthly cheque lists for March which had been emailed to Councillors.
- b) Members noted the CCLA investment report for March - £573.27.

C24.191 NORTH WEALD MODEL FLYING CLUB

Further to the report given by the member of public at the start of the meeting, members recalled that at the last meeting representatives of the North Weald Model Flying Club attended the Parish Council meeting and voiced their concern regarding the possibility of losing their position on the Old Golf Range, North Weald Airfield. The Clerk was asked to write to the Acting Chief Executive, which had been completed, and a full copy of the response was provided to Councillors. It was noted that perhaps EFDC was trying to regulate the unlimited access currently available to the club.

C24.192 VE DAY COMMEMORATIONS & MEMORIAL SEAT AT DEBT OF HONOUR

Members were aware that the UK will commemorate VE Day on the 8th May this year, and that no commemorative events had been agreed to be organised by the Parish Council, with the exception of the Chairman of the Parish Council to read the Proclamation and the lighting of the Ruby Red Lamp of Peace at the Debt of Honour. Full details of the suggested official VE day actions were provided to members. Councillors also recalled that an amount of £1,000 had been earmarked for any celebratory events. The Clerk set out that the current proposal was to have a lamp of peace at the Debt of Honour with a reading of the proclamation at 9.30pm, however she suggested that a seat could be erected just in front of the Debt of Honour to commemorate Arthur Moreton, who was the ambassador for the airfield, and the Royal Norwegian Airforce and Airfield itself. The seat would be hard wood with an engraving on the back reading 'NWBPC 2025 and VE day 80'. It was suggested this seat could be unveiled on VE day at around 8pm, with some light refreshments served before the proclamation. Mr Moreton's family could be invited to attend. This was **AGREED** by Councillors.

The Clerk also advised that there was an event being held on Park Close in North Weald that was open to all the community. It was for children, at a cost of £6 per child, and included facepainting and other activities. Any proceeds from the event would go to the North Weald Museum. Councillors discussed the possibility of donating either some funds to this event, or perhaps some bunting or paying for one of the activities, however after some debate it was felt this could set a precedent if other members of the community were holding similar events. Cllr Irvine **PROPOSED** that the Parish Council wished the organiser well for their event, but no donation would be made. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs Jackman and subsequently **AGREED**.

C24.193 HASTINGWOOD VILLAGE HALL

Members were advised that the Clerk had received an invitation for Councillors to Visit Hastingwood Village Hall to see the recently completed renovation works. Councillors suggested Thursday evenings would be best. The Clerk would go back to the committee to confirm.

C24.194 NORWEGIAN COMMEMORATIVE STONE ON REVETMENTS AT NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD

Members will have seen from the Environmental Minutes that a discussion was held regarding the Revetments and the commemorative stone on the Airfield. The Revetments have fallen into considerable disrepair, and the suggestion from the Environmental Committee is that the Commemorative Stone placed there by the Norwegians in 2012 should be moved adjacent to the Hawker Hurricane (Gate Guardian) at the new entrance to the airfield when this is constructed, together with an explanatory plaque as to the reasoning why it was moved. Cllr Clegg asked the Clerk if she had spoken with Cllr Tyler regarding this, to which she confirmed she had, and that Cllr Tyler felt it should not be moved. The Clerk confirmed she had written to Henning Hansen Homb, Lieutenant Colonel / Chief Base Support and Garrison services in the Norwegian Airforce; however a response had not yet been received. It was **AGREED** to support such a move in principle, subject to the Norwegians being in agreement.

C24.195 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Councillors noted works were still underway to analyse the responses to ensure every response was given full consideration.

C24.196 QUEENS HALL COMMUNITY CENTRE AND MEMORIAL PLAYING FIELDS

The Clerk advised that meetings had been held with Vistry Group regarding the Queens Hall Community Centre with regard to the re-development of the area which includes the Memorial Playing Fields, and the Queens Hall. The Parish Council has made contact with Solicitors well versed in Charity Law to further progress the necessary matters. A further meeting will be held on 8th April, and it was hoped a more detailed update would be available at the May meeting.

C24.197 FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THORNWOOD HALL –TUESDAY 28 OCT ‘25

As reported earlier in the meeting, works were underway to consider the best way to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Thornwood Common Parish Hall, which would be on Tuesday 28th October. Cllr Mrs Hawkins continues to work on this event, and will provide regular updates.

C24.198 NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD MARKET TRAFFIC

The Clerk advised she had been contacted by a number of local residents in relation to the traffic that has started to build up again around the local roads close to the market. Also, the fact that many residents in roads adjacent to the market are unable get in or out of their roads on a Saturday. One resident had also advised that large 4 x 4 vehicles were accessing the grass triangle at the end of Church Lane where the bollards are, and driving onto the High Road this way just to cut out the traffic. Members recalled that the Market Manager had agreed to meet with the Parish Council prior to Easter. The Clerk had asked for a meeting but currently no response has been received. Another email had been sent with a copy of this item as detailed in the Agenda, and Darren Goodey had also been copied in. Cllr Tyler had submitted a Councillors report voicing his and Residents' concerns.

The Chairman stated that traffic had once again started to pick up, and that further signage was needed from Church Lane and Wellington Road. Cllr Ms Wood stated that many people were also parking up by the memorial and along York Road which was causing problems locally. It was **AGREED** that the Council should push for another meeting with Darren Goodey as soon as possible.

C24.199 ECC LOVE YOUR BUS GRANT APPLICATION

At the time of compiling the agenda, the Clerk had received notification that the application she had submitted had been successful for funding. The amount applied for was £50,000, however confirmation as to the whether or not the total amount of £50,000 is to be received is still awaited. The Clerk stated that she hoped this would be sufficient to obtain extra signage for bus stops and assist with children going to school. Cllr Ms Wood asked if it would also cover the bus service for Hastingwood residents, however the Clerk advised she was unclear and would have to wait until full details had been received.

Meeting closed 20.52

Signed

Date